Opening of new Branches of Post Offices in Thane District

4144. SHRI CHINTAMAN WANAGA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of proposals pending for opening new Branches of Post Offices in Thane district in Maharashtra as on June 30, 1996;

(b) the period of pendancy and reasons therefor; and

(c) the time by which the new branches of post offices are likely to be opened?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Two proposals for opening of new Post Offices in Thane District of Maharashtra were pending as on June 30, 1996

(b) These two proposals namely Nane (Wada) and Akloli were pednging for 2 and 3 months respectively as on June 30, 1996 as the targets for opening of Extra-Departmental Branch Post Offices in Maharashtra for the year 1996-97 were completed.

(c) Post Offices are opened progressively under Annual Plan Schemes based on fulfilment of norms depending upon merits of each case and subject to availability of targets and resources.

[Translation]

Funds Allocated for Conversion of Meter Gauge Lines

4145. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA VERMA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the percentage of funds allocated for converting meter gauge line into broad gauge *vis-a-vis* the total railway budget during the last three years;

(b) whether it is a fact that more funds are being spent on the work of gauge conversion whereas the amount which was to be spent on the maintenance of the existing rail lines is not being spent;

(c) whether as a result of decline in the percentage of expenditure on the maintenance of rail lines, trains are derailed quite often now a days;

(d) whether the railway officers have drawn the attention of the Government on this situation; and

(e) if so, the steps being contemplated to bring about improvement in the above situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) The percentage allocation for Gauge Conversion works for the last three years is as under :

1994-95	21%
1995-96	18%
1996-97 (BE)	12%

(b) No, Sir. Sufficient funds are being allocated for Gauge Conversion and maintenance of rail line works based on the traffic needs, priority of works/projects etc.

(c) There is no direct link between percentage of expenditure and derailments.

(d) and (e). Do not arise.

[English]

Tenders for Import

4146. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the areas where Railways had already obtained orders of import and the areas where Railway had issued Tenders for import during June 1996 to October 31, 1996;

(b) whether Railways are contemplating to have import substitution in most of our fastest train track renewal programme; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Introduction of Christmas Special Trains

4147. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce "Christmas Special Trains" in Kerala this year; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). A daily special train on the Broad Gauge between Madras Central and Quilon, a tri-weekly special on the Metre Gauge between Madras Egmore and Quilon and a weekly Broad Gauge special between Vijayawada and Kottayam are being run to clear extra rush of passengers on the occasion of Christmas and Sabarimalai season.

Corporate Guarantee

4148. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to restore the facility given to M/s. Traco Cable Company Limited, a Kerala Government Undertaking to execute Corporate Guarantee instead of Bank Guarantee for the purchase order of Jelly filled cables as the same is withdrawn